
Federal Agency and Federal Library Reports

National Commission on Libraries and Information Science

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Commission Members

In late 1993 President Clinton appointed Jeanne Hurley Simon of Illinois to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) for a term ending July 19, 1997, replacing J. Michael Farrell. The Senate confirmed her nomination on November 20. That same day, the President named Simon to chair the commission. The Senate received four more nominations on November 22: Martha Gould, Frank Lucchino, Bobby Roberts, and Gary Sudduth.

On February 2 the Senate received the nomination of Robert Willard, director of government marketing for Mead Data Central in Dayton, Ohio, to replace James Lyons. The Senate confirmed these five nominations on April 14, 1994.

On July 12 the President submitted to the Senate the appointment of Joel Valdez, the senior vice president for business affairs at the University of Arizona. On October 7 the Senate confirmed his appointment, replacing Ben Chieh-Liu.

Continuing commissioners are NCLIS Vice Chair Elinor Swaim, Shirley Adamovich, Daniel Casey, Carol DiPrete, Norman Kelson, Kay Riddle, and Barbara Taylor. Winston Tabb represents the Librarian of Congress, a permanent NCLIS member.

Budget and Staffing

NCLIS staff remained at five full-time permanent employees, along with contractual staff dealing primarily with the Library Statistics Program. Peter R. Young continued as executive director.

The NCLIS budget for FY 1994 was \$904,000, up from the appropriation of \$889,000 for FY 1993. The commission held planning meetings in March and

July 1994. The March sessions in Atlanta coincided with the Public Library Association conference, at which the preliminary results of the study of public libraries and Internet were announced. NCLIS met in conjunction with the Mountain Plains Library Association and held a hearing in Nevada, October 25–27, 1994.

Along with all other federal agencies, NCLIS participated in and was affected by the initiatives of the National Performance Review (NPR), begun in September 1993 to cut costs and improve services. In December 1993 NCLIS submitted a streamlining plan and in August 1994 submitted a discussion draft of a customer service plan.

Support for Executive and Legislative Branches

During the year the commission developed and strengthened working relationships with officials in the executive and legislative branches so that NCLIS had opportunities for timely input in national policies affecting library and information services. Chairperson Simon kept an active schedule of appointments and consultations with many officials in the federal government, meeting with some of them several times over the year. She met with people in various offices of the Executive Office of the President, Department of Commerce, Department of Education, National Archives and Records Administration, National Corporation for Public and Community Service, National Institute for Literacy, National Library of Medicine, and National Science Foundation.

Simon and her staff also met with members and staff of the congressional committees concerned with appropriations, education, information policy, libraries, telecommunications, and other technology, as well as with officials in agencies of the legislative branch, such as the Government Printing Office and the Library of Congress.

Part of NCLIS's 1994 contribution to reauthorization of the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) was two policy analyses of the recommendations from the conference as well as a March 1994 snapshot of the status of implementation of the recommendations. NCLIS also participated in a task force on LSCA reauthorization coordinated by the American Library Association.

Commissioners and staff made or maintained contacts with national library and information organizations. NCLIS also expanded its base from which to understand policy issues and formulate advice to include consultations with different or new nonprofits such as Libraries for the Future, the Center for Civic Networking, and the Benton Foundation.

NCLIS reviewed and responded to memoranda from the Legislative Reference Division of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regarding reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Government Reform and Savings Act, Goal 2000, Office of Educational Research and Improvement reauthorizations, and Education Research and Statistics reauthorizations.

The commission answered questions and provided background for staff and members of Congress on a variety of subjects, mostly related to libraries in a networked, electronic environment; libraries in support of education; and the status

of training and education for library and information services. Likewise, the reports from commission activities related to libraries and education were distributed to appropriate congressional committees and discussed with them.

In addition to OMB and congressional inquiries, other entities have solicited suggestions on draft documents, regulations, and other items. Examples of these opportunities in 1994 were the draft reports of the National Information Infrastructure Advisory Council and the Information Infrastructure Task Force. [For further information on NII activities, see the special report earlier in Part 1—*Ed.*]

Library and Information Services in a Networked Environment

In 1993 NCLIS named Charles R. McClure, professor at Syracuse University's School of Information Studies, the first NCLIS distinguished researcher, to examine the impacts of networking on libraries and information services.

McClure's work for the commission was later refined and extended to include a survey and analysis of public libraries and Internet, for which the co-principal investigators were McClure and Douglas L. Zweizig, professor at the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Syracuse Ph.D. student John Carlo Bertot and others analyzed the survey results, of which selected findings were as follows:

- 20.9 percent of U.S. public libraries are connected to Internet.
- Public library access to Internet is not equitable.
- Public libraries serving larger communities are likelier to have access to Internet than public libraries serving smaller communities.
- There are regional variations in public libraries' connectivity to Internet.
- Public libraries are using Internet services to answer reference inquiries, access federal information resources, and perform interlibrary loan transactions.
- There are wide variations in public libraries' Internet costs. Libraries for small populations report annual costs of \$412. Libraries for larger populations report annual costs of \$14,697.
- Federal assistance for connecting public libraries to Internet is required.

Vice President Gore met with NCLIS on July 29, 1994, and called for "a concerted effort to ask the questions and to inventory the challenges and to come up with the best answers" regarding libraries and the national information infrastructure (NII).

In response, the commission conducted briefings in Washington, D.C., on September 21–22, 1994. The first day featured directors and other officials of 15 state library agencies, who briefed commissioners on the status of statewide library networks and plans for connecting libraries to Internet. On September 22 the commissioners, Charles McClure, representatives of Congress and the administration, and other key representatives from the library and information services

communities examined the federal role relating to libraries and the Information Superhighway.

The following points emerged from discussion at the briefing on the federal role:

- Better program coordination is needed among federal agencies to provide support to libraries for Internet access.
- Libraries need to partner with other service agencies developing network services at the state and local levels.
- Additional studies are needed on the status of library networking, especially for academic and school libraries.
- An analysis of federal programs relating to libraries and networking is needed.
- Further work is needed to clarify what libraries require in order to take full advantage of the benefits of Internet/NII, especially in light of plans for LSCA reauthorization.
- There is a need to clarify the vision of library involvement in the Information Superhighway.
- The question of whether the safety-net role limits libraries in providing a full range of networking services needs to be resolved.

Libraries and Education

In early December 1993 NCLIS concluded its series of regional briefings and forums on library and information services and literacy programs for children and youth with events in Des Moines. (Earlier forums were held in May 1993 in Boston and in September 1993 in Sacramento.) The forums served as the basis for the commission to advise the Clinton administration and the Congress on formulating national programs and plans for young people. NCLIS published and distributed the proceedings of each briefing and forum.

In 1993 the commission launched a cooperative project with the American Library Association's Office of Research and Statistics and the American Association of School Librarians to collect selected statistics from a sample of school library media centers in 12 states. This 1993–1994 joint project was designed to obtain current information for activities related to the legislation cited above, because the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) last collected statistics on school library media centers in 1985. Also, results of NCES's fall 1994 survey are not expected until late 1995.

The survey report was published and distributed in June 1994 and reprinted in September. The following summarizes some of the survey's findings:

- Many school libraries are poorly equipped to support instruction.
- One-half of elementary school libraries buy less than one book per student per year.

- One-half of secondary school libraries buy less than 0.33 books per student per year.
- Almost no school libraries have access to Internet.
- There is a wide variance in average annual funding for school libraries.
 - Elementary school libraries receive from \$15 to \$58,874 per year.
 - Secondary school libraries receive from \$155 to \$100,810 per year.
- In 31 percent of elementary school libraries, the latest world atlas available has a copyright date before 1990.
- In 21 percent of secondary school libraries, the latest world atlas available has a copyright date before 1990.
- Much work is needed to provide opportunities for school library media specialists to work more closely with classroom teachers.

Library Statistics

For the sixth consecutive year, NCLIS and the National Center for Education Statistics operated the Library Statistics Program through an interagency agreement. The original component of the Library Statistics Program is the Federal-State Cooperative System for public library data (FSCS). The training workshop for state data coordinators is the major yearly event for the public library component of the Library Statistics Program. The December 1993 workshop (the sixth annual workshop) included territorial representatives for the first time.

NCES published *Public Libraries in the United States: 1992* in August 1994. Within the past three years, 75 percent of the states have submitted their public library data to NCES by the July 31 deadline and the quality and completeness of the data required no follow-up by NCES.

A pilot test of the survey of state library agencies was conducted to prepare for the actual fall 1994 survey. Planning and development took place for collection of 1994 data on academic libraries. Progress with the Department of Education's 1994 School and Staff Survey (to include school library media centers) was reviewed with the Statistical Committee of the American Association of School Librarians.

On May 16–17, 1994, NCLIS and NCES co-sponsored the second annual Forum on Library and Information Services Policy. The 1994 forum focused on policy issues related to the role of libraries in NII and statistical indicators needed to measure the effective involvement of libraries. NCLIS issued the proceedings of the forum in September 1994. NCES also helped support the September briefings on libraries and the Information Superhighway.

International Activities

The commission completed its ninth year of cooperation with the Department of State to coordinate and monitor proposals for International Contributions for Scientific, Educational and Cultural Activities (ICSECA) funds and to disburse the funds. The allocation for ICSECA, included in the State Department's

International Organizations and Programs account, was formerly under International Conventions and Scientific Organizations Contributions (ICSOC). Seven projects received a total of \$175,000.

Commission staff continued to host orientation and information-sharing sessions for librarians and other officials visiting the United States, usually under the auspices of the U.S. Information Agency or Meridian House International. Executive Director Young met with visitors from France, Hungary, and China in FY 1994.

Publications

Annual Report 1992–1993. April 1994.

Briefing and Open Forum on Children and Youth Services: Redefining the Federal Role for Libraries (Sacramento, CA). December 1993.

Briefing and Open Forum on Children and Youth Services: Redefining the Federal Role for Libraries (Des Moines, IA). February 1994.

Libraries and the National Information Infrastructure: Proceedings of the 1994 Forum on Library and Information Services Policy. September 1994.

Library and Information Services Policy: A Forum Report. (Forum held September 23–24, 1993). 1994.

Lynch, Mary Jo, Pamela Kramer, and Ann Weeks. *Public School Library Media Centers in 12 States: Report of the NCLIS/ALA Survey*. June 1994.

McClure, Charles R., John Carlo Bertot, and Douglas L. Zweizig. *Public Libraries in the Internet: Study Results, Policy Issues, and Recommendations*. June 1994.

McCook, Kathleen de la Peña. *Toward a Just and Productive Society*. 1994.

Walsh, Taylor. *The National Information Infrastructure and the Recommendations of the 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services*. 1994.

At the time this report was written, copies of all the above were available free from NCLIS.

Conclusion

Continuation of programs in education and the information infrastructure, involvement with such legislative matters as the reauthorization of the Library Services and Construction Act, celebration of the commission's 25th year, exploration of new efforts in research, analysis, and statistics, and having a budget of \$901,000 with which to work are among the challenges and assets in 1995 for the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.